

Fishery Management Plan for the Commercial Tanner Crab Fishery in the Kodiak District, 2018

by

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and

Nathaniel Nichols

December 2017

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Divisions of Sport Fish and Commercial Fisheries



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| Weights and measures (metric) | | General | | Mathematics, statistics | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|--|--|---|----------------|
| centimeter | cm | Alaska Administrative Code | AAC | all standard mathematical signs, symbols and abbreviations | | |
| deciliter | dL | all commonly accepted abbreviations | e.g., Mr., Mrs., AM, PM, etc. | alternate hypothesis | H _A | |
| gram | g | all commonly accepted professional titles | e.g., Dr., Ph.D., R.N., etc. | base of natural logarithm | <i>e</i> | |
| hectare | ha | | | catch per unit effort | CPUE | |
| kilogram | kg | at | @ | coefficient of variation | CV | |
| kilometer | km | | | common test statistics | (F, t, χ^2 , etc.) | |
| liter | L | compass directions: | | confidence interval | CI | |
| meter | m | east | E | correlation coefficient (multiple) | R | |
| milliliter | mL | north | N | correlation coefficient (simple) | r | |
| millimeter | mm | south | S | covariance | cov | |
| Weights and measures (English) | | west | W | degree (angular) | ° | |
| | cubic feet per second | ft³/s | copyright | © | degrees of freedom | df |
| | foot | ft | corporate suffixes: | | expected value | <i>E</i> |
| | gallon | gal | Company | Co. | greater than | > |
| | inch | in | Corporation | Corp. | greater than or equal to | ≥ |
| | mile | mi | Incorporated | Inc. | harvest per unit effort | HPUE |
| | nautical mile | nmi | Limited | Ltd. | less than | < |
| | ounce | oz | District of Columbia | D.C. | less than or equal to | ≤ |
| | pound | lb | et alii (and others) | et al. | logarithm (natural) | ln |
| | quart | qt | et cetera (and so forth) | etc. | logarithm (base 10) | log |
| yard | yd | exempli gratia (for example) | e.g. | logarithm (specify base) | log ₂ , etc. | |
| Time and temperature | | | | minute (angular) | ' | |
| | day | d | Federal Information Code | FIC | not significant | NS |
| | degrees Celsius | °C | id est (that is) | i.e. | null hypothesis | H ₀ |
| | degrees Fahrenheit | °F | latitude or longitude | lat or long | percent | % |
| | degrees kelvin | K | monetary symbols (U.S.) | \$, ¢ | probability | P |
| | hour | h | months (tables and figures): first three | | probability of a type I error (rejection of the null hypothesis when true) | α |
| | minute | min | letters | Jan,...,Dec | probability of a type II error (acceptance of the null hypothesis when false) | β |
| | second | s | registered trademark | ® | second (angular) | " |
| | Physics and chemistry | | trademark | ™ | standard deviation | SD |
| | | all atomic symbols | | United States (adjective) | U.S. | standard error |
| alternating current | | AC | United States of America (noun) | USA | variance | |
| ampere | | A | U.S.C. | United States Code | population sample | Var var |
| calorie | | cal | U.S. state | use two-letter abbreviations (e.g., AK, WA) | | |
| direct current | | DC | | | | |
| hertz | | Hz | | | | |
| horsepower | | hp | | | | |
| hydrogen ion activity (negative log of) | | pH | | | | |
| parts per million | | ppm | | | | |
| parts per thousand | ppt, ‰ | | | | | |
| volts | V | | | | | |
| watts | W | | | | | |

FISHERY MANAGEMENT REPORT NO. 17-48

**FISHERY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE COMMERCIAL TANNER
CRAB FISHERY IN THE KODIAK DISTRICT, 2018**

by

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December 2017

The Fishery Management Reports series was established in 1989 by the Division of Sport Fish for the publication of an overview of management activities and goals in a specific geographic area, and became a joint divisional series in 2004 with the Division of Commercial Fisheries. Fishery Management Reports are intended for fishery and other technical professionals, as well as lay persons. Fishery Management Reports are available through the Alaska State Library and on the Internet: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/publications/>. This publication has undergone regional peer review.

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This document should be cited as follows:

Richardson, N., and N. Nichols. 2017. Fishery management plan for the Commercial Tanner Crab Fishery in the Kodiak District, 2018. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Fishery Management Report No. 17-48, Anchorage.

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ABSTRACT

This document provides an overview of the Kodiak District Tanner crab *Chionoecetes bairdi* harvest strategy and summarizes regulations governing the commercial Tanner crab fishery including vessel registrations, gear specifications, operation of pot gear, pot storage, landing requirements, fishing hours, and inseason reporting. The Eastside and Southwest sections of the Kodiak District open for a commercial Tanner crab fishery at 12:00 noon January 15, 2018, unless delayed by weather. The Semidi Island Overlap Section will also open to vessels validly registered for the Kodiak District fishery. The total Kodiak District guideline harvest level (GHL) is 400,000 pounds with 260,000 pounds available in the Eastside Section and 140,000 pounds available in the Southwest Section; no GHL is established in the Semidi Island Overlap Section. Based on the GHL, the pot limit in the Eastside and Southwest sections is 20 pots per vessel; the pot limit in the Semidi Island Overlap Section is 70 pots per vessel. ADF&G will manage the Kodiak District commercial Tanner crab fishery using inseason catch reports. Section and subsection closures may occur before GHLs are fully harvested based on fishery performance and harvest distribution. Closure announcements will be communicated to the fleet with as much notice as possible. Participants should note that delivery requirements and post-closure pot storage requirements vary depending on the type of closure and the amount of advance notice given for the closure.

Key words: Tanner crab, *Chionoecetes bairdi*, Kodiak District, Area J, harvest strategy, regulations

INTRODUCTION

AREA DESCRIPTION

The Kodiak District for Tanner crab *Chionoecetes bairdi* includes waters of Registration Area J south of the latitude of Cape Douglas, west of the longitude of Cape Fairfield and east of the longitude of Cape Kumlik (5 AAC 35.505). The district is subdivided into eight sections: Northeast, Eastside, Southeast, Southwest, Semidi Island Overlap, Westside, North Mainland, and South Mainland (Figure 1).

2018 GUIDELINE HARVEST LEVELS

Based on the 2017 Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) trawl survey, Eastside and Southwest sections met regulatory requirements for a 2018 commercial Tanner crab fishery. The total 2018 Kodiak District Tanner crab GHL is 400,000 pounds; the Eastside Section GHL is 260,000 pounds and the Southwest Section GHL is 140,000 pounds. The Northeast, Southeast, Westside, North Mainland, and South Mainland sections did not meet mature male abundance thresholds and will remain closed for the 2018 commercial Tanner crab season (Figure 1).

By regulation, the Semidi Island Overlap Section opens when either the Southwest Section of the Kodiak District or the Chignik District is opened; therefore, the Semidi Island Overlap Section will open in 2018 to vessels validly registered for the Kodiak District fishery.

REGULATIONS

OVERVIEW

State of Alaska Tanner crab regulations begin on page 44 of the 2017–2019 Commercial King and Tanner crab regulation booklet. Specific regulations pertaining to Tanner crab fisheries in Registration Area J begin on page 68. The harvest strategy, 5 AAC 35.507 *Kodiak, Chignik, and South Peninsula Districts C. bairdi Tanner Crab Harvest Strategies*, is located on pages 71–73. Following is a summary of 2018 Tanner crab fishing regulations in the Kodiak District. For additional information, contact the ADF&G office in Kodiak or refer to the ADF&G website at: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingCommercial.main>.

HARVEST STRATEGY

In Kodiak District, eight sections are managed separately, six of which have established mature male abundance thresholds (5 AAC 35.507(b)(1)(A–F)). A commercial Tanner crab fishery may occur when: 1) preseason trawl survey abundance estimates meet or exceed established abundance thresholds; 2) two or more sections, excluding South Mainland and Semidi Island Overlap sections, are opened; 3) abundance is sufficient to provide a guideline harvest level (GHL) of at least 100,000 pounds per section; and 4) abundance is sufficient to provide a total district harvest of at least 400,000 pounds.

SEASON OPENING AND FISHING PERIODS

The 2018 Kodiak District commercial Tanner crab season opens by regulation at 12:00 noon, January 15, 2018, unless delayed by weather (5 AAC 35.510(a)(2)). The entire Kodiak District fishery will be delayed for 24 hours if the January 14, 4:00 a.m. National Weather Service (NWS) marine forecast for the Kodiak District (NWS forecast area PKZ132) contains gale warnings for the current day and night, or the following day and night. If after the initial weather delay, the 4:00 a.m. NWS marine forecast for the current day and night, or the following day and night, again contains gale warnings, the season opening will be delayed an additional 24 hours. Season opening delays may continue on a rolling 24-hour basis until 12:00 noon on January 25, when the season will open regardless of the marine weather forecast.

Fishing gear may only be operated for 10 hours each day, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:59 p.m. Baited gear may be left in the water for 14 hours each night, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:59 a.m. (5 AAC 35.510(a)(1)).

Based on the department's assessment of effort, harvest rate, and remaining GHL, daily fishing periods may be increased when it appears the GHL will not be fully harvested by the end of the regulatory season (March 31).

PERMITS AND REGISTRATION

Vessel operators must have a valid 2018 Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission (CFEC) permit card for the Kodiak District and a 2018 commercial vessel license prior to registering with ADF&G.

The Kodiak District Tanner crab commercial fishery is a limited entry fishery. The CFEC adopted two vessel length categories for issuance of Kodiak District limited entry Tanner crab permits: vessels with an overall length of less than 60 feet (TB9BK) and vessels from 60 to 120 feet in overall length (TB9AK). Permit holders with a permit for vessels less than 60 feet in overall length may not make landings on a vessel 60 feet or greater in overall length. Permit holders with a permit for vessels from 60 to 120 feet in overall length may use their permit on any vessel 120 feet in overall length or less. Additional information on permits and vessel licenses can be obtained from CFEC in Juneau (Appendix A).

All vessels must be validly registered with ADF&G prior to fishing. The Kodiak District is a superexclusive registration district for Tanner crab (5 AAC 35.506(a)). A vessel validly registered for a superexclusive registration area may not be used to take Tanner crab in any other registration district during the same registration year (5 AAC 35.005(c)). A registration is validated upon being signed by an ADF&G representative, regardless of fishery participation or landings. A vessel operator that registers for the 2018 Kodiak District Tanner crab fishery may

not operate any other Tanner crab vessel registered for any other superexclusive registration area within the same registration year (5 AAC 35.020(h)). The Tanner crab registration year is August 1–July 31 (5 AAC 35.020(c)).

Registrations will be validated no earlier than 26 hours before the fishery opens (5 AAC 35.506(k)(2)). Vessel tank and gear inspections are no longer required. The ADF&G office in Kodiak will be open on Sunday, January 14 from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. to validate registrations in person or via fax or e-mail (nathaniel.nichols@alaska.gov; Appendix A). ADF&G staff will also be validating registrations at St. Paul (downtown) and St. Herman (Dog Bay) harbors; to locate staff, contact the dockside sampling cell phone (907-539-5954). If the fishery is delayed due to weather, the registration validation period will also be delayed. A copy of the vessel registration must remain onboard the vessel while fishing. The registration automatically becomes invalid 24 hours after closure of the fishery.

Vessel operators must register to fish in a single section of the Kodiak District. A vessel may not be registered for, or fish in, multiple sections simultaneously. After a section closure, vessel operators may change section registration by contacting ADF&G in Kodiak and delivering all crab onboard the vessel.

Vessel operators may change section registration before a section closure; however, they must notify ADF&G of their intent to change sections and deliver all crab onboard the vessel. Any gear in the original section must be open and unbaited prior to delivery. Vessel operators may place baited gear in the new section prior to delivery, but may not retrieve that gear until all crab from the original section has been delivered.

All tender vessels must register with ADF&G prior to tendering. Tender vessels may not have a pot-hauling block or other Tanner crab gear onboard and may not be used to harvest Tanner crab.

GEAR LIMITS AND CONFIGURATION

Based on the GHL, the pot limit for 2018 Kodiak District Tanner crab fishery is 20 pots per vessel in the Eastside and Southwest sections and 70 pots per vessel in the Semidi Island Overlap Section (5AAC 35.525(c)(1)(a) and 5 AAC 35.507(c)(3)(C)).

Commercial Tanner crab pots may not be more than 10 feet long by 10 feet wide by 42 inches high. Rigid tunnel eye openings must be less than five inches (13 cm) high and have a perimeter greater than 36 inches (5 AAC 35.050). Ring nets are not legal gear in the Kodiak District for commercial harvest of Tanner crab (5 AAC 35.525(a)).

Escape mesh or rings are required on all Tanner crab pots. Each pot must contain at least one third of one vertical surface of the pot composed of not less than 7¼ inch stretched mesh webbing or have at least four circular escape rings which have an inside diameter of at least five inches (5 AAC 35.525(b)(1)(A)). Escape rings must be installed on the vertical plane of the pot to allow for escapement of undersized crab. Escape rings are not required to be placed within a certain distance from the bottom of the pot; however, ADF&G recommends placing rings within one mesh from the bottom of the pot to optimize escapement of undersized or female crab.

All pots must also contain a biodegradable escape mechanism consisting of an opening 18 inches or greater in length placed parallel to and within six inches of the bottom of the pot, and laced, sewn, or secured together by a single length of untreated, 100 percent cotton twine no larger than 30 thread and knotted at each end only (5 AAC 39.145).

BUOY TAGS AND MARKING REQUIREMENTS

To ensure compliance with pot limit regulations, the main or trailer buoy on each pot must display one fishery-specific identification tag (buoy tag) issued by ADF&G for the current year (5 AAC 35.526(a)). Buoy tags may be purchased at a cost of \$1.50 per tag at the ADF&G office in Kodiak or via phone, e-mail, or fax (Appendix A). After purchase, buoy tags may be mailed through the U.S. Postal Service. A valid 2018 Tanner crab CFEC permit card (TB9AK or TB9BK) is required to receive tags.

Should buoy tags be lost during the fishery, replacement tags may be obtained by contacting ADF&G in Kodiak. The vessel owner, operator, or agent must provide the unique number(s) of each lost tag and complete an affidavit form describing how the tags were lost (5 AAC 35.526(b)). Pots with lost tags may be left on the fishing grounds, but must be secured fully open with all bait and bait containers removed until replacement tags are affixed to the pot.

At least one buoy must be marked with the five-digit ADF&G vessel number and may not be marked with additional numbers (5 AAC 35.051); however, symbols and letters are acceptable on this buoy. Trailer or other buoys may be marked with any desired numbers, symbols, or letters to mark ownership or string sequence.

OPERATION OF OTHER POT GEAR AND POT STORAGE

A person or vessel that operates pot gear (e.g., cod pots, subsistence pots) within the Kodiak District at any time during the 14 days immediately before the start of the 2018 Kodiak District Tanner crab fishery may not participate in the 2018 commercial Tanner crab fishery (5 AAC 35.053(1)). While the Kodiak District Tanner crab fishery is open, vessels registered for the commercial Tanner crab fishery may not operate groundfish pots, including pots to catch Pacific cod for bait (5 AAC 35.053(2)). Pacific cod caught as bycatch in Tanner crab pots may not be sold; however, Pacific cod bycatch may be retained for bait and must be reported on fish tickets at the time of landing.

Up to 20 pots may be stored in waters 25 fathoms or less with all bait and bait containers removed; rectangular pots must have doors secured fully open, and cone and pyramid pots must have doors not secured closed (5 AAC 35.052(a)). Legal Tanner crab pots with buoy tags attached may be placed into shallow water storage during the 14 days prior to the fishery start. However, once placed into storage, vessel operators may not retrieve pots during the 14 days prior to the start of the fishery, including the 26-hour period between registration validation and the fishery opening (5 AAC 35.053(1)).

No vessel may have more than the specified pot limit onboard or in wet storage in the Kodiak District while the vessel is validly registered for Tanner crab. Converted pots used as “storage boxes” to store crab in the water are not permitted unless the crab storage devices are attached to the vessel at all times.

TANNER CRAB SIZE LIMIT

The legal minimum retainable size of Tanner crab in Kodiak District is 5.5 inches carapace width (5 AAC 35.060). Only legal male Tanner crab can be retained; all other crabs incidentally captured must be immediately returned to the water unharmed (5 AAC 35.065). King crab may not be legally retained for subsistence or personal use during the commercial Tanner crab fishery (5 AAC 02.021).

LANDING REQUIREMENTS

Vessel operators delivering Tanner crab to ports outside Kodiak District are required to contact the ADF&G office in Kodiak prior to leaving the district (5 AAC 35.031(b)). Vessels delivering outside the district must provide the estimated number of crab onboard the vessel at the time of the closure, delivery location and processing facility, and estimated time of arrival. Additional requirements exist for catcher-processor vessels. Vessels legitimately delayed due to weather or mechanical issues will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

After the closure of the Tanner crab season, vessels intending to participate in the Pacific cod fishery must deliver all crab and either remove all Tanner crab pots from the water or place pots into shallow-water storage before targeting Pacific cod.

INSEASON CATCH REPORTING AND MANAGEMENT

ADF&G will manage the Kodiak District commercial Tanner crab fishery using inseason catch reports provided by vessel operators. Inseason management allows for real-time fishery decisions and the flexibility to consider changes in crab abundance, effort, fleet behavior, and weather.

Catch reports will be taken using satellite dispatch, e-mail (nathaniel.nichols@alaska.gov), or phone (907-486-1840). The Kodiak ADF&G shellfish management office dispatch numbers are 0715 and 7894. Vessel operators will be issued a reporting worksheet during registration. ADF&G will initially call vessels for reports starting at 6:00 p.m. daily. ADF&G may change the reporting schedule if effort declines.

Fishery performance as measured by catch of legal crab per pot will be closely monitored, as will reports of sublegal and/or female crab bycatch. Closures may occur before the total GHL is achieved if catch per pot indicates the number of legal males has substantially declined, if harvest is concentrated, or if excessive sorting of sublegal and female crabs is occurring. ADF&G will make every effort to allow sufficient time for vessels to configure gear for storage before a closure; however, the potential exists for short advance notice closures.

Because there is no established GHL for the Semidi Island Overlap Section, inseason management actions will be based solely on fishery performance. If catch per pot of legal males is low or if bycatch of nontarget crab is high, full or partial section closures may occur before the regulatory season closure on March 31.

Closure announcements will be communicated to the fleet by dispatch, distributed via the ADF&G news release e-mail subscription service (<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>), and relayed through participating processors and NWS marine weather VHF forecasts when available.

SUMMARY OF CLOSURE SCENARIOS

Delivery requirements and post-closure pot storage requirements vary depending on the type of closure (entire or partial section) and the amount of advance notice given for the closure. Following is a summary of closure scenarios, pot storage options, delivery requirements, and re-registration requirements contained in 5 AAC 35.030, 5 AAC 35.031, 5 AAC 35.052, 5 AAC 35.527, and 5 AAC 35.556.

Closure of the entire section with six or more hours advance notice

- All pots must be open and unbaited at the time of the closure.
- Vessel operators are required to deliver all catch within 24 hours of the closure.
- Open and unbaited pots may be stored at any depth up to 72 hours after the section closure. After 72 hours, all gear remaining in the closed section must be removed from the water or placed in shallow water storage (25 fathoms or less).
- After a section closure, vessel operators may contact ADF&G from the fishing grounds and register for a different open section. Once registered, vessel operators may place baited gear in the other open section prior to delivery, but may not retrieve that gear until all crab from the initial section has been delivered.

Closure of the entire section with less than six hours advance notice

- Vessel operators are required to proceed directly to port at the time of the closure and deliver catch within 24 hours.
- After the closure, vessel operators may not place gear in storage or retrieve pots from storage until all catch has been delivered.
- Vessel operators are required to return to the fishing grounds within 72 hours after delivery to rail dump all crab from any baited gear left on the grounds.
- If baited gear remains in the closed section after the initial delivery, a tank inspection will be required before vessels can register and resume fishing in a different open section.
- Vessel operators may register for a different open section only after completing delivery and legally storing gear in the closure area.

Partial closure of the section with six or more hours advance notice

This situation occurs when bays or other specific areas close prior to closure of the entire section.

- Pot gear in the closure area must be open and unbaited at the time of the closure.
- Vessel operators fishing within the closure area may be required to deliver all catch within 24 hours of the closure. Any changes to the delivery requirement will be communicated to the fleet via dispatch and distributed by news release at the time of the closure announcement.
- Vessel operators may store open and unbaited pots in waters deeper than 25 fathoms for 72 hours in the closure area.
- Vessel operators may place baited gear in other areas of the section that remain open to fishing.
- Within the partial closure area, vessel operators may only operate gear during the daily fishing period (8:00 a.m. and 5:59 p.m.), even when retrieving unbaited gear after the closure.

Partial closure of the section with less than six hours advance notice

This scenario is unlikely. Should this type of closure occur, landing, pot storage, and registration requirements will be defined and communicated to the fleet by dispatch and distributed by news release at the time of the closure announcement.

REFERENCE CITED

Urban, D., D. Pengilly, D. Jackson, and I. Vining. 1999. A Tanner crab harvest strategy for Kodiak, Chignik, and the South Peninsula Districts. A Report to the Board of Fisheries. Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Commercial Fisheries, Regional Information Report 4K99-21, Kodiak.

FIGURES

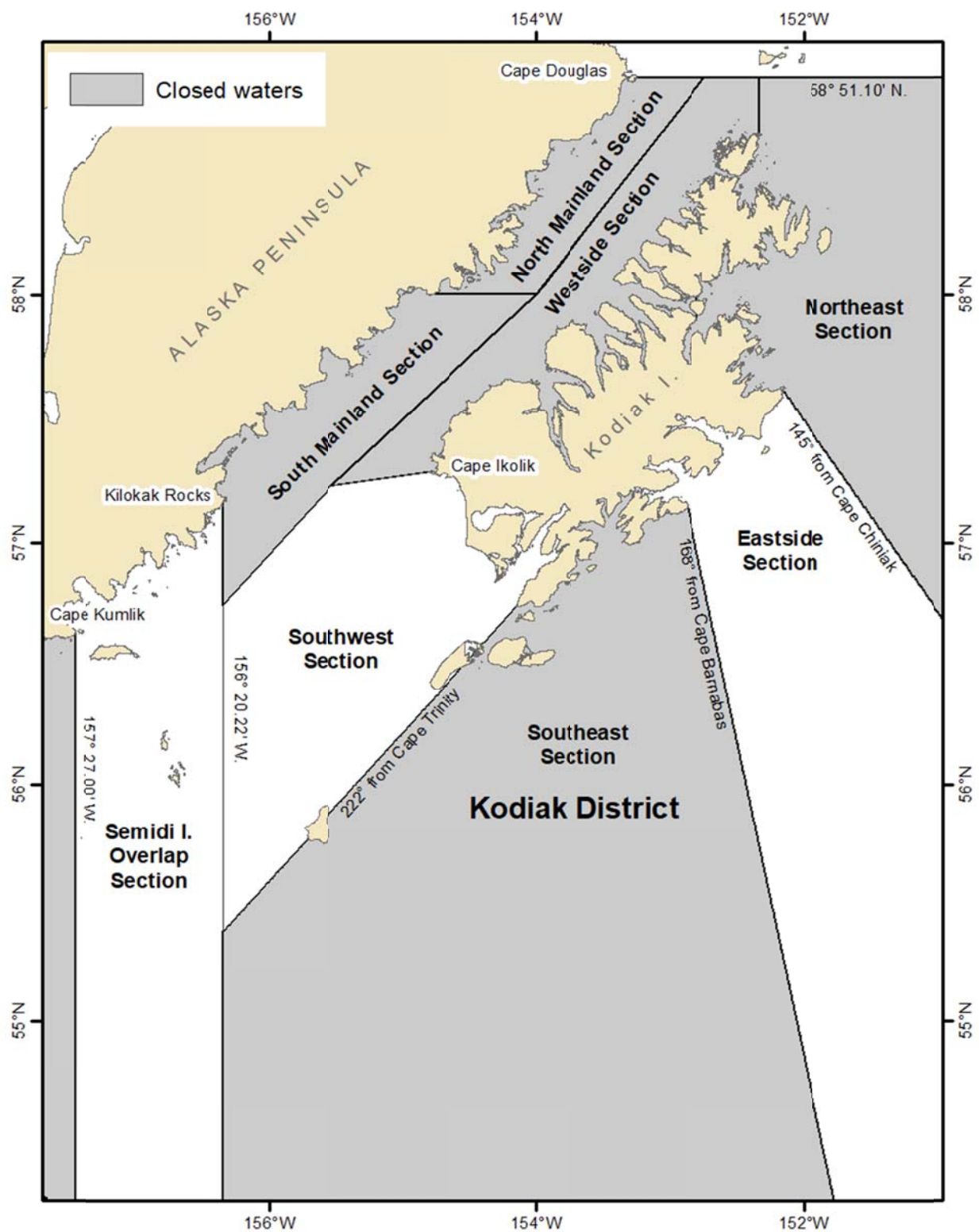


Figure 1.—Kodiak Tanner crab district and sections, 2018.

**APPENDIX A. CONTACT PERSONS, AGENCIES,
AND PHONE NUMBERS**

10

Kodiak Office

Mailing address: 351 Research Court
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